

HOUSE BILL No. 1305

DIGEST OF INTRODUCED BILL

Citations Affected: IC 23-14-48.5; IC 30-2-13-29.

Synopsis: Cemetery funds. Establishes the consumer protection fund for cemetery maintenance. Provides that the fund consists of contributions from the owners of certain cemeteries. Requires the state board of funeral and cemetery service to administer the fund. Provides that the fund may be used for maintenance of a cemetery when the owner is unable to maintain the cemetery and money is not available from the cemetery's perpetual care fund. Increases the maximum balance amount of the preneed consumer protection fund from \$1,500,000 to \$2,500,000.

Effective: July 1, 2007.

Cheatham

January 16, 2007, read first time and referred to Committee on Family, Children and Human Affairs.

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Introduced

First Regular Session 115th General Assembly (2007)

PRINTING CODE. Amendments: Whenever an existing statute (or a section of the Indiana Constitution) is being amended, the text of the existing provision will appear in this style type, additions will appear in **this style type**, and deletions will appear in ~~this style type~~.

Additions: Whenever a new statutory provision is being enacted (or a new constitutional provision adopted), the text of the new provision will appear in **this style type**. Also, the word **NEW** will appear in that style type in the introductory clause of each SECTION that adds a new provision to the Indiana Code or the Indiana Constitution.

Conflict reconciliation: Text in a statute in *this style type* or ~~this style type~~ reconciles conflicts between statutes enacted by the 2006 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

HOUSE BILL No. 1305

A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning business and other associations and to make an appropriation.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

1 SECTION 1. IC 23-14-48.5 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE
2 AS A **NEW** CHAPTER TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE
3 JULY 1, 2007]:

4 **Chapter 48.5. Consumer Protection Fund for Cemetery**
5 **Maintenance**

6 **Sec. 1. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), this chapter does**
7 **not apply to:**

8 (1) a cemetery owned by a municipal corporation or other
9 governmental unit;

10 (2) a religious cemetery; or

11 (3) a cemetery:

12 (A) that is ten (10) acres or less in size;

13 (B) that is owned and operated entirely and exclusively by
14 a nonprofit mutual association in existence on June 14,
15 1939; and

16 (C) in which burials took place before June 14, 1939.

17 (b) This chapter applies to the whole of a cemetery described in

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subsection (a)(3) if, directly or indirectly:

(1) any structure is constructed above or below ground in the cemetery and interment rights in the structure are offered for sale to the general public; or

(2) the acquisition of:

(A) additional land; or

(B) an interest in additional land;

causes the cemetery to exceed ten (10) acres in size.

Sec. 2. As used in this chapter, "board" means the state board of funeral and cemetery service established by IC 25-15-9-1.

Sec. 3. As used in this chapter, "fund" refers to the consumer protection fund for cemetery maintenance established by section 4 of this chapter.

Sec. 4. (a) The consumer protection fund for cemetery maintenance is established. The board shall administer the fund and shall deposit contributions remitted under section 5 of this chapter in the fund.

(b) The expenses of administering the fund shall be paid from money in the fund.

(c) The money in the fund and the interest accruing to the fund remain in the fund and do not revert to the state general fund.

(d) Money in the fund is continuously appropriated for the purposes of this chapter.

Sec. 5. (a) The owner of a cemetery shall contribute the following to the fund:

(1) In the case of a cemetery for earth burials, an amount equal to one percent (1%) of the sale price of each burial plot sold or transferred.

(2) In the case of a community or public mausoleum or a community or public garden crypt, an amount equal to one percent (1%) of the sale price of each sale of entombment or inurnment rights.

(3) In the case of a community columbarium, an amount equal to two dollars (\$2) per niche sold or transferred.

The owner shall remit the contributions required under this subsection to the board for deposit in the fund.

(b) In the case of a payment to a cemetery owner of part of the sale price for a burial plot, entombment or inurnment rights, or a niche, the cemetery owner shall pay to the fund an amount proportional to the amount required by subsection (a)(1) through (a)(3). In the case of a nonmonetary transfer in the sale of a burial plot, entombment or inurnment rights, or a niche, the cemetery

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owner shall pay to the fund the cash equivalent of the amount that would be required by subsection (a)(1) through (a)(3) if the sale were for cash. The payment by the cemetery owner under this section must be in cash and shall be remitted to the board:

(1) not more than thirty (30) days after the end of the month in which payments are received; or

(2) not more than thirty (30) days after the end of the month in which there is a nonmonetary transfer.

(c) Payments are required under this section only on the original sale or transfer and are not required for any subsequent resale or transfer of the same plot, rights, or niche.

Sec. 6. Money in the fund may be used to provide cemetery maintenance when the board finds that:

(1) the owner of a cemetery is unable to maintain the cemetery;

(2) money in the perpetual care fund of the cemetery is depleted, subject to a dispute that prevents distribution of the money, or otherwise unavailable for the purposes of the perpetual care fund; and

(3) interested persons are unable to take over the management, care, and general supervision of the cemetery under IC 23-14-48-10.

Sec. 7. (a) The owner of a lot in a cemetery, the next of kin of an owner of a lot in a cemetery, or another interested person may request maintenance assistance from the fund by filing a verified complaint with the board.

(b) The board shall investigate each verified complaint. Within thirty (30) days after a verified complaint is filed, the board shall complete its investigation and issue findings of fact. If the board makes the findings required under section 6 of this chapter concerning a cemetery, the board may enter into a contract with any suitable person to provide maintenance at the cemetery until a responsible person is able to provide care and maintenance for the cemetery.

(c) If the cost of maintaining a cemetery is paid from the fund, the fund is entitled to recover the amount paid from the owner of the cemetery, and the board shall ask the attorney general to take all reasonable steps to collect that amount from the cemetery owner. Any amount collected from a cemetery owner under this subsection shall be deposited in the fund.

SECTION 2. IC 30-2-13-29 IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: Sec. 29. (a) Money in the

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fund may be used to provide restitution to a seller who performs a defaulted contract, to a purchaser, or to a purchaser's estate for pecuniary loss arising from a trust or an escrow required by:

- (1) this chapter;
- (2) IC 23-14-49-1;
- (3) IC 30-2-9; or
- (4) IC 30-2-10.

The repeal of a statute cited in this subsection does not terminate the ability of a party to a contract made under the repealed statute to receive restitution under this chapter.

(b) The purchaser, seller, or other interested person must request restitution by filing a verified complaint with the board.

(c) The board may investigate any verified complaint. Within sixty (60) days after a verified complaint is filed, the board shall determine if a seller has defaulted on a contract. If the seller's obligation to perform under the contract cannot be collected from the seller, the board shall order the auditor of state to make restitution from the fund.

(d) The amount of restitution may not exceed the gross amount of the original contract plus interest, compounded annually, on the gross amount that is figured, for each year or part of a year for which restitution is owed, using the lesser of:

- (1) the rate set forth in IC 24-4.6-1-101 in effect on January 1 of each year; or
- (2) the monthly average yield on United States Treasury Securities for the month of January of each year, adjusted to a constant maturity of one (1) year, as published by the Federal Reserve.

The fund may not be charged with court costs or the payment of legal or other fees. In computing the amount of restitution, the board shall give credit for:

- (1) merchandise delivered; and
- (2) resources still existing in trust.

(e) When restitution is paid from the fund, the fund is subrogated to the amount of the restitution, and the board shall ask the attorney general to take all reasonable steps to collect the subrogated amount from the seller. Any amount collected shall be deposited in the fund.

(f) Money in the fund may only be used for a purpose that is specified in this section.

(g) The payment of restitution from the fund is not a right, and a purchaser does not have a vested right in the fund as a beneficiary of the fund.

(h) The status of the fund shall be annually reviewed by the board.

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1 If the board determines during its annual review that the fund balance
2 equals or exceeds ~~one~~ **two** million five hundred thousand dollars
3 ~~(\$1,500,000); (\$2,500,000)~~, the board shall suspend payments to the
4 fund until after the next annual review that the board determines that
5 the fund balance is less than ~~one~~ **two** million five hundred thousand
6 dollars ~~(\$1,500,000); (\$2,500,000)~~.

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